A Centennial. Ketrospect;

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Methodism in Natchez, Miss.,

----FROM----

1799 to 1884.

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REV. W. C. BLACK:

New Orleans Christian Advocate Print.

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^{*}Not a Pastor.

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INTRODUCTION.

In the early part of this year the Sunday school of the Jefferson Street Church, in Natchez, determined to have an address prepared on the history of Methodism in this city, and I was invited to prepare it. Although I heartily endorsed the project of having such an address; yet, as the collection of materials for writing an accurate history is a species of drudgery for which I never had any fondness, I sought to transfer the task to other hands. Upon me, however, the duty was imposed, and I have discharged it to the best of my ability.

I have aimed, not only to write a history of the church itself, but also to give some information concerning the lives and characters of each of its pastors. Such information, I am sure, can not fail to interest and edify every lover of our Zion.

The labor required has been far greater than I had supposed it would be, although I had not expected an easy task.

We have no Quarterly Conference records or local church records of any kind that date back of 1833, and the records for twenty years subsequent to that date are exceedingly meagre and unsatisfactory. The Quarterly Conference Journal from 1865 to 1878 has also been lost. Moreover, the Journal of the Mississippi Conference was burned last winter, and, furthermore, no history of Methodism in Mississippi has ever been published. The manuscript history of Mississippi Methodism, by Rev. John G. Jones, would, doubtless, have saved me a deal of labor could I have had access to it; but it was in the hands of Bishop McTyeire. Under these circumstances the collection of materials was, necessarily, quite a laborious task.

I have rummaged the published minutes of the Annual Conferences since 1773; I have ransacked more than a score of volumes of Methodist history and biography. (See Appendix A) I have corresponded with a large number of persons scattered over several States; I have sought personal interviews with those who "have come down to us from a former generation."

The reader will notice in some instances a great disparity in the length of the sketches of two preachers of equal distinction. This is unavoidable, owing to the fact that in some cases there are published biographies to draw from, while in others there are not. I have

also given less space to the living than to the dead. No one, I am sure, will regret the space occupied with the anecdotes concerning John Johnson, since they are not only interesting in themselves and illustrative of his character, but also serve to point a moral. Since the history of Methodism in the Southwest commences in Natchez, and since these pages contain sketches of more than fifty preachers who have labored in this field—many of whom were among the celebrities of our church, I am not without hope that this little book will be of interest, not only to citizens of Natchez, but to Methodist people throughout the Southwest.

So far as style is concerned, I have aimed at a Franklinian simplicity and transparency, and the writing in this style has cost greater effort than would have been required to write in a style more ornate. I had intended to give a sketch of each of our presiding elders; but I found that this would make my book too bulky.

W. C. Black.

NATCHEZ, MISS., August, 1884.

A CENTENNIAL RETROSPECT.

The introduction of Methodism 1799. into Natchez was almost coetaneous with the establishment of the authority of the United States government in this region. Spanish troops were withdrawn in 1798, and in August of that year Winthrop Sargent, the first territorial governor of Mississippi, arrived and began his administration. Immediately, Bishop Asbury resolved to occupy this newly opened field. He would doubtless have done so before, but for the fact that Protestantism was not tolerated by the Spanish authorities. He selected as the first representative of our church in this region, Tobias Gibson, a South Carolinian, then twenty-eight years of age and in the eighth year of his ministry. Gibson was above mediocrity in intellectual power and had a fair education for that day. He had pecuniary resources sufficient to give him a comfortable support. He was moreover a man of very frail physique. Yet he readily and gladly consented to come as a missionary to

this far-off field, well knowing the toils, hardships and privations incident to such a work. His salary was to be sixty-four dollars a year. At that time the white settlements in Mississippi were confined to a very narrow strip of country extending along the Mississippi river from Fort Adams to Walnut Hills, now Vicksburg. All the rest of Mississippi, all of Alabama with the exception of a very limited area around Mobile, and a considerable part of Georgia, was a vast wilderness inhabited only As the journey from Charleston by savages. S. C. to Natchez through this region would have been an exceedingly perilous one, our missionary came by a very circuitious route. He traveled on horseback to the Cumberland river near Nashville, a distance of about six hundred miles, and then sold his horse, bought a canoe and paddled down the Cumberland into the Ohio, down the Ohio into the Mississippi, and down the Mississippi to Natchez. began his labors at once, preaching in almost every settlement in the Territory. He preached almost every day, in school-houses, in private dwellings, on flatboats, in the woods anywhere that a congregation could be assembled. In order to meet his appointments, he had to swim creeks, to make his way through pathless woods, to travel in all sorts of weather

and sometimes to camp out at night. close of his first year he had gathered into the fold sixty members. The second year the membership increased to eighty and in 1801 to a hundred. In 1802 there was a decrease bringing the membership down to eighty-five This decrease was doubtless owing to the process of pruning, for it must be remembered that excision as a remedy for trangression was much more generally practiced then than now. Under the pressure of his arduous labors and constant exposure, Gibson's health now Accordingly he went on horsebegan to fail. back to the session of the Annual Conference of 1802, which was held in Harrison county, Ky., to secure help. It needs to be stated just here, that this region was included in the South Carolina Conference previous to 1802. January 1, 1802, until November 1, 1812, Mississippi Territory was included in the Western Conference, which embraced very nearly all of the United States west of the Alle-From 1812 until 1817, ghany mountains. Mississippi was included in the Tennesee Conference.

1803. Gibson's mission to the seat of the Western Conference was successful. Moses Floyd, a young man of three years' experience in the ministry, was placed in charge of the

work, and Gibson was put on it as a supernumerary. The ecclesiastical year extended from October, 1802, to October, 1803. In 1802 the territorial capital was removed Natchez to Washington, a village six miles east of Natchez. During the same year Jefferson College was founded at Washington—the first institution of learning in the South-west. Washington at once began a most rapid growth. It became in a short time a gay, bustling city of perhaps two thousand inhabitants. It was for years the great centre of wealth, refinement and culture in the South-west. Natchez was at this time in many respects a place of secondary importance. As Washington was included in the Natchez circuit until 1826, it is important that the reader should bear this Our church at Washington was for years far more flourishing than that at Natchez. At Natchez the church had peculiar obstacles growing out of the profligacy of the place. At this early period, and for decades afterwards "Natchez-under-the-hill" had a national reputation as a den of infamy. Every form of vice and crime abounded, with scarcely an attempt at concealment. It is exceedingly difficult for us of the present day to realize the moral degradation of those early times. would take a Carlislean-French-Revolution pen to do justice to the subject.

1804. The next year, 1804, Floyd was continued in charge of Natchez circuit with three assistants—Gibson, Amos and Harriman. On the fifth of April of this year, Gibson died in Warren county. A suitable monument now marks his resting place about five miles south of Vicksburg on the Warrenton road. early death was caused by the hardships and exposures incident to the life of a pioneer itinerant preacher. It would be difficult to say too much in his praise. All the accounts concerning him that have come to us from his associates in the ministry and from those who were the beneficiaries of his pastoral labors agree in ascribing to him a saintliness of character that is rarely attained by the fallen sons of Adam's race. Col. Claiborne in his history of Mississippi says: "If ever any man received a divine call to do good, to persuade men to reform, Tobias Gibson was the man." similar and even more eulogistic language is employed by other historians of that period. In pulpit ability he was far above mediocrity. Though he did not hesitate when oceasion required to deal in the terrors of the law, yet his favorite theme was the boundless love of God. Pathos was his forte. He might very appropriately have been called "a weeping prophet,"

so deeply was he moved by the truths he preached. He organized churches at Natchez, Washington and Kingston, and I know not how many others in Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne and Warren counties. Such a name should be had in everlasting remembrance. 1804, Floyd closeot having previously married Miss Hannah Griffing, a descendant of Samuel Swayze, the founder of the Kingston settlement. For several years he practiced medicine in Claiborne county, Miss., and in Louisiana; but after a time, his health having become too feeble to endure the labor and exposure required of a pioneer physician, he engaged in teaching, first at Pine Ridge, and afterwards in Natchez. He died here of measles in 1814, and was buried in the old cemetery just in rear of the cathedral. His grave can not now be identified. He commanded the respect and confidence of the entire community Abraham Amos, who was one of Floyd's colleagues in 1804, was a young man and unmarried. records show that during the next four years he traveled in four different States—Tennessee. Kentucky, Illinois, and Ohio. He then located. Of his subsequent life we have no information. Hezekiah Harriman, who was also on the circuit during the year 1804, had itinerated eight years in Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky, previous to his pastorate here. His arduous labors and constant exposure in this Southern climate so impaired his health that he was never again effective. He had a pastoral charge in Maryland, during the next two years, but was too feeble for efficient service. He was superannuated during the last eleven years of his life. He died in 1817 in his native State, Maryland. He, like Gibson, was a martyr to the cause of Christ. We, of the present generation, owe a debt of gratitude of boundless dimensions to these heroic men who sacrificed their lives in order to preach the everlasting gospel to our forefathers.

1805. In 1805 Natchez circuit had two preachers. Launer Blackman and C. T. N. Barnes, better known as Nathan Barnes. Blackman was a native of New Jersey, and belonged to a family that occupied a high social position. He joined the itinerant ranks at the age of nineteen. It throws light upon the church affairs of that day to know that, during the first five years of his ministry, Blackman traveled in five different States: first, Maryland; then, Delaware; then, successively, Virginia, Kentucky and Mississippi. In order to reach Natchez he had to travel about fourteen days through a region inhabited by sav-

ages. Eleven nights out of the fourteen he slept on the ground, with his saddlebags for his pillow and the sky for his covering. became one of the very foremost preachers of his day. He was a natural orator, a diligent student and a wise administrator. He possessed social qualities which endeared him to all classes—high and low, rich and poor. man of his day was more abundant in labors, and none achieved greater success or left more numerous and more ardent friends. We have no means of measuring with any precision the results of his labors in Natchez, as the reports are for the entire circuit, which included about four or five counties. The membership for the circuit at the close of the year was 132. At the session of the Western Conference, held in Scott, Ky., October 2, 1805, Natchez circuit was divided into three circuits. Wilkinson circuit being cut off from it on the south, and Claiborne circuit on the north. new circuit was also formed in Louisiana, called the Opelousas circuit. These four circuits were constituted a district—called the Mississippi district—of which Blackman. though only twenty-four years of age, was made presiding elder. Blackman was the first presiding elder that was ever seen in Mississippi. Previous to this time the presiding elders had not visited this region, it being simply impossible for them to do so, owing to the immense size of their districts. In 1802 Natchez was in the Kentucky district, which included, besides Mississippi, nearly all of Kentucky and Tennessee and the region north of the Ohio river. Blackman remained on the Mississippi district two years, and achieved great success. He did not confine his labors to the circuits in his district, but traveled largely in all the regions roundabout. visited New Orleans and even went to Florida. He organized many churches and secured the erection of many houses of worship. Wesley and Asbury, he seemed almost ubiquitous. Under his administration an additional circuit—the Washita—was formed, making five in the Mississippi district.

1806. In 1806 Natchez circuit had two preachers—C. T. N. Barnes and Thomas Casley. Both were quite young; Barnes being in the third, and Casley in the second year of his ministry Barnes, it will be remembered, had served the work, the previous year, as junior preacher under Blackman. He was a man of fine intellectual abilities and of most excellent character He was a member of the General Conference of 1808—quite an honor to be conferred upon a youth of only four years' experi-

ence. He located in 1818. Casley fell into the Tennessee Conference at its organization, and was a member of it at his death, in 1857 Though not a brilliant man, his ministry was eminently successful. During his ministry of fifty-three years he usually occupied fields where the labor was great and the salary small. Two of his sons entered the ministry—one of whom is still living.

1807. In 1807 Caleb W Cloud was appointed to Natchez circuit. He had been preaching only two years. The membership increased from 94 to 117. How much of this increase was in Natchez we are not informed. as the reports are for the circuit, which included Washington, Kingston and other churches During this year the church at Natchez came into possession of a house of worship. Where services were held previous to this can not now be ascertained. was purchased from William Barland for the sum of \$250. It extended from east to west through the square bounded by Main, Union, Franklin and Locust streets. The trustees were Launer Blackman (See Appendix B.) Newitt Vick, Reuben Gibson, William Foster, Philip Gorral and David Lattimore. As the church was then able to erect only a small building, it was decided to locate it on the end fronting Locust street, reserving the other end for a more spacious building at some future The building erected was quite a small structure. It was built of brick, and was called Cokesbury Chapel. It was in use until 1819. The erection of this building was accomplished chiefly through the instrumentality of the presiding elder, Launer Blackman, though his efforts were strongly seconded by William Foster and Newitt Vick, who was afterward the founder of the city of Vicksburg. Cloud located in 1811. Nothing further is known of him. We will now glance at the subsequent history of Blackman. At the close of his second year on the Mississippi district he was appointed to a district in Tennessee. He remained in the presiding eldership as long as he lived, though he was for a short time a chaplain in Jackson's army. For nine years after this he traveled in Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana, at the rate of about five thousand miles a year, preaching almost daily. name became a household word in all that region. His popularity was wonderful, and his success equally so even in that day of revival power. Vast multitudes flocked to hear the word of life from his lips, and thousands of genuinely converted souls were added to the church. He was suddenly cut off in the very zenith of his usefulness. On June 7, 1815, he was crossing the Ohio river, at Cincinnati, in company with his wife, whom he had just The boat was propelled by sails. married. His horses became frightened at the flapping of the sails and leaped into the river, carrying him with them. All efforts to rescue him were in vain. His body was recovered and buried in Cincinnati. A marble slab marks his resting-place, though the inscription on it is now scarcely legible. He was a member of the General Conference of 1812. Had he lived. it is quite probable that he would have been elected Bishop in 1816. It is an inscrutable Providence that removes such a man at the early age of thirty-four.

1808. In 1808 the pastor was Richard Browning—a young man of four years' experience. The minutes for this year show a membership of 65 against 117 the year before. This decrease was, doubtless, owing to the taking of some churches from this circuit and attaching them to another. As the circuit still embraced Natchez, Washington, Kingston, and some others, it is certain that no one of them had much numerical strength. Browning located in 1810. Every attentive reader of the early history of American Methodism is struck with the number of preachers who

located after traveling only a few years. was largely attributable to the meagreness of the salaries they received. In 1802 William McKendree, then presiding elder, received only twenty dollars salary. In 1808 he received only forty-three dollars and sixty-seven cents. And part of these sums was paid in home-knit socks and other articles of clothing of like quality. It is easy for the fashionable people of the present day to get up a disdainful smile in speaking of the shabby appearance of the early Methodist preachers. It should be remembered that these men could have earned a competency in other callings. Many of them were men who would have adorned any of the professions. Their heroism is unsurpassed in the annals of the world. Many of them after a few years found their health so completely wrecked that they were obliged to retire. Others married, and soon found that the cares of a family were incompatible with an itinerant life. As a rule, these preachers who retired from the itinerancy did not cease to render efficient service to the church. Though engaged in secular callings, they continued to preach, and an amount of good was accomplished through their instrumentality which only eternity can reveal.

1809. In 1809 Natchez circuit was served

by Thomas Hellums—a young man then in the fourth year of his ministry. He was deeply pious and thoroughly consecrated to his work. He had a fine analytic mind, and was a very strong, impressive preacher. From 1809 to 1813 he itinerated in Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio. At the close of 1813 his health was so impaired that he located. never afterward joined the itinerant ranks, but was exceedingly diligent and useful as a local preacher. After a time he became insane. His insanity took the form of fear. afraid of everybody and everything. thought even his best friends were seeking to take his life. Yet, strange to say, his preaching powers were not impaired in the least. He could analyze a text as well as he ever did. and preach with as great unction and power. His end was a sad one. He attended a camp meeting in Arkansas, and was importuned to preach, but persistently refused for several days. On Sunday, however, he consented to occupy the pulpit, and preached a most masterly and effective sermon. As soon as the services were over his malady exhibited itself with unusual power. He drew a large knife to defend himself against his friends who had gathered around him. Thus armed, he retreated from the presence of his imaginary foes.

mounted his horse and rode off. He was never heard of afterward. There are several facts, however, which seem to indicate the fate that befell him: (1) He rode a magnificent horse, and the horse was never seen again. (2) That section of country was at that time infested by robbers. (3) Not a great while afterward a man's skeleton was found near the camp ground. Those best acquainted with the facts believe that he died at the hands of a highwayman.

In 1810 Natchez circuit was served 1810. by two preachers—William Houston Miles Harper. Houston had been preaching six years. He was a man of average abilities, and devoted to his work. He located in 1817 He was a member of the General Conference of 1812. His subsequent labors were mostly in Tennessee. Miles Harper, the assistant preacher for this year, was a very remarkable Though not a man of extensive learning, he had rare gifts as a speaker. His voice was strong, clear and musical, and entirely under his control. He could speak in a whisper and yet be heard by an ordinary congregation, and he could roar like a lion. ioined the Tennessee Conference in 1804, and at once entered upon a career of signal useful-Few men have had more seals to their

ministry than did he during the early years of his itinerancy. His preaching, however, lacked much of being uniform. It was only occasionally that he was at his best. At camp meetings, under favorable circumstances, he sometimes preached with overwhelming power. In 1829, at a camp meeting held at Spring Hill Church, near Fayette, Miss., he preached with such overpowering eloquence that almost the entire audience rose to their feet and moved forward toward the speaker. When he had finished they were standing as near to him as they could get. Other instances similar to this might be given. He preached in various fields until 1829, when he retired from the itinerant ranks. For several years after that date he lived in Washington, and kept a hotel. finally removed to Tensas parish, La., where he died in 1843. He was buried in the cemetery at Natchez. I believe his grave bears no monument. There are many persons now living in this region who have often heard him preach. But no one who heard him only in the later years of his life could form anything like a proper estimate of his pulpit power in his earlier days. Having ceased to study and improve his mind, and having also become thoroughly secularized, his strength had departed. Though residing at Washington, he was for several years connected with this church as a local preacher.

1811. Isaac Quinn was the next pastor. He had been in the itinerant ranks since 1804. He continued to travel—mostly in Tennessee—until 1817, when he located. He was a member of the General Conferences of 1812 and 1816.

The next pastor was one of the most remarkable men of his age-John Johnson. He was born in Louisa county, Va., January 7, 1783. His father died when John was When he was about grown his an infant. mother moved to the neighborhood of Gallatin, Tenn., and became a tenant of a Mr. Douglass. Douglass owned some slaves, and one of these slaves owned a fragment of a spelling book and knew the alphabet, though he could neither John Johnson became a read nor spell. pupil of this old darkey. After working hard on the farm all day he would go at night to the old negro's cabin to receive instruction. By the firelight he and his sable instructor pored over the dingy, tattered pages until he had mastered the alphabet. He now knew as much as his teacher. This was the only schooling he ever had. He taught himself to read in this way: He procured an old hymn book. In this book there were several hymns that he knew by heart from having heard them sung. He would get some one to show him in the book one of the hymns he knew, and he would tug away at this until he could read it. One hymn after another he read in this way until, at the end of six months, he could read the Bible moderately well. During this time he often sat up until midnight after working hard He also learned to write without a all day. This difficult task he accomplished teacher. in this way: He procured from a friend manuscript copies of two songs—the words of which he had already in his memory. He first learned to read these, and then copied them. By copy ing them over and over again, perhaps, a thousand times he learned to write a very legible From this time on for several years he read every book he could get his hands on; so that when he was twenty-four years old he was far above the average frontiersman in general information. About this time he was converted and joined the Methodist Church. One year later—1808—he was admitted into the Western Conference as a traveling preacher. The first two years his work was in Ohio. During his second year he rode one day twenty-five miles to meet an appointment at a little rude hut in the woods. The appointment had not been well circulated, and church going was a new

business in that section any way, and so he found an audience of one woman, with a child about two years old. Her faded, threadbare apparel showed that she was poor, while her countenance indicated that her heart was sad. He soliloguized thus: "If my Saviour preached to a solitary woman, why should not I?" So he took his text and began. He was a very pathetic preacher, and his sermon on this occasion was of such a character that before he got through (to use his own words) "there was one universal shout all over the congregation." When the services were over he spoke a few words to the woman, and she departed. she went away he could hear her, every few steps, exclaiming, in a subdued tone of voice, "Glory! glory!" A month later he was at the rude little "meeting-house" again, and was greatly surprised to find an audience larger than the house could hold. His audience on the previous occasion had spread his fame through all that region. Moreover, he learned that this solitary auditor, at the first appointment, had walked and carried her child ten miles to hear that sermon. Her husband opposed her going and refused to let her have a horse. At the second appointment both she and her husband were present. Moreover, this time she came on horseback, the husband walking. One result of this second service was the conversion of this wicked husband. whose name was Baker. Before the close of the year a flourishing church was organized at that place, and Baker was made a class leader. He remained faithful until death. To this day the church in that locality maintains a vigorous and healthful existence. So much for a sermon to a solitary auditor. The next year— 1811—Johnson was preaching on a circuit, lying along the Big Sandy, in what is now West Virginia. During this year he procured a substitute for a short time, and went to a camp meeting in the central part of Virginia. His object in going was to improve himself by hearing the cultivated preachers of that section. Up to this time his work had been altogether in those frontier regions where fashion was at a discount. Accordingly, he had, literally, taken "no thought for raiment." That his apparel would attract any special attention at the camp meeting was a thought that had never entered his head. When he reached the encampment, however, he found himself "the observed of all observers." John the Baptist, with "his raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins," would scarcely have been a greater curiosity. He was almost as dark as an Arab. His coalblack hair was parted in the middle and hung far down upon his shoulders; his shoes were coarse russets, such as negroes wore in ante bellum days; his coat and pants were made of the very coarsest quality of tow and, for some reason—why, no one could divine—he wore his pants pinned tight around his ankles. Moreover, his suit was old and very badly weather stained. He wore a very broadbrimmed white wool hat that had seen four years' service. It was a camp meeting custom in those days to invite every minister present to preach; so the ministers in charge were in a quandary. They did not wish to slight a brother, and yet it would never do, they thought, to put that man up to preach to that wealthy, refined, intelligent, aristocratic audi-(These people were, doubtless, all ence. After a consultation they sent a F F. V 's.) committee to wait upon the backwoods brother. and tell him candidly why they could not invite him to preach. This was perfectly satisfactory to him. He had not come to preach, but to hear. The meeting dragged on to the last day without producing any perceptible effects. When the last day came, and the tent holders were all busy packing up to go home, it was decided to put up Bro. Johnson. would do no harm now, as there would be

scarcely anybody to hear him. When the hour for service arrived there were under the vast shed three men, one woman and four The preachers themselves had retired to a remote tent to wind up some business. He began the service by singing, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy" He was a fine singer, and had a voice like a trumpet. Moreover, he had just spent an hour in the grove near by in communion with God, and so he commenced the service with his heart throbbing with emotions that added to the natural pathos of his voice. As the rich tones of his voice rang out, full and clear, upon the morning air, there was a something in them that arrested the attention of the whole encampment, and one after another of those who were least occupied proceeded to the shed. The earnest, pleading tones of his orening prayer attracted still others. Before his sermon was half ended all the packing up and wagon loading had ceased, and everybody on the ground—preachers and all—had joined the assembly. The preachers were greatly surprised to find that this frontiersman spoke as good English as themselves His sermon was one of those appeals that stir the soul to its profoundest depths. At its close forty penitents came to the altar. When that service had

ended the tent holders unpacked their goods, and the meeting lasted two weeks longer and resulted in more than two hundred con-This occurred only a few months versions. before his appointment to Natchez. To reach Natchez he had to travel twelve hundred miles on horseback, and during much of the distance he was in danger from savage Indians. Whether he made the acquaintance of the tailor and the barber on the route we are not informed. reached Natchez about the middle of November, 1811, and at once entered vigorously upon his work. In a letter to his mother, written a few days after his arrival, he speaks of his circuit as "in bad order." Although there was a membership of about a hundred, with three local preachers and five class leaders, yet he says there was "seldom a prayer meeting or class meeting on the circuit." He speaks of "the people in general" as "very rich, very proud and very polite—exceeding all for compliments," but as having "little humility, little religion and little piety." He also uses the following language: "Here are a few whose trust is in the Lord, and whose treasure is in heaven; who stand like solid rocks against the swelling waves and pelting storms of persecution, temptation and opposition." From another letter, written March 15, 1812-a period of four months—he had traveled 800 miles, preached forty-seven times and taken between twenty and thirty persons into the church. During this period, besides doing a good deal of general reading, he had "read the Old Testament through once, the New Testament three times, and the book of Revelation four times." He also makes note of the fact that he has "been studying music." We learn also from other sources that he was at this time quite a good Greek and Hebrew scholar. Yet he speaks of himself as "doing very little." circuit, which consisted of, at least, twelve preaching-places, paid him for his year's labor \$74 50, and of that the Natchez Church paid not one cent. Perhaps he would have been willing to take fewer "compliments" and more cash. One of his letters contains a fuller description of the city of Natchez, at that period, than I have met with elsewhere. The population was 1,500—black and white. The blacks numbered 460. There were sixty-one stores, seven public inns, seven lawyers, eight doctors, three English schools, two weekly newspapers and a reading-room. The Bank of Mississippi was then in operation with a capital of half a million—Stephen Miner, President. He also enumerates more than fifty shops. such as tailor, barber, hatter, saddler, cabinet maker shops, etc. This was the year of earthquakes. Alluding to these, one of his letters contains the following language: "Our poor old crazy earth has taken her shaking fits and seems to ring the death-bell of her approaching dissolution. While she bellows and mourns and belches out her fiery floods, shall we not seek a more permanent foundation and build our hopes on the Rock of Ages?" The next year he traveled the Nashville circuit, which then embraced twenty-six appointments. Only six years afterward he was sent to Nashville again, which was then a station for the first time. He remained two years, and the church prospered greatly under his administration. Of course, by this time he had put on the habiliments of civilized life. He became a man of extensive learning, and was regarded as one of the strongest preachers of his day. Even at the time of his pastorate in Natchez he had become a fair Greek and Hebrew scholar. died at Mount Vernon, Ill., in 1857 His biography—a most readable book—was published a few years since by our Publishing House, at Nashville. I know of no career which better illustrates the truth of the adage, "Where there is a will there is a way" Even Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson had far better facilities for self-culture than did he. Such a name should not pass into oblivion. Of his colleague during his pastorate in Natchez—Samuel Lewis—nothing is known except that he was then in the second year of his ministry and that he located only two years afterward.

1813. Similar darkness enshrouds the history of the next pastor—George A. Colbert. Admitted into the Conference in 1810; located in 1814. These two statements sum up about all that is known of him. He served the work only until April, when he was sent elsewhere, and his place filled by William Winans, who also remained here during the next year, 1814.

1814. Winans was born in Pennsylvania, November 3, 1788. His father died when he was quite young, leaving his mother in destitute circumstances. This made it necessary that he should go to hard labor at a very early age. He found employment in an iron foundry Compelled to toil "from early morn to dewy eve," he grew up without education. Thirteen days' schooling was all he ever received. Moreover, his associations had a very deleterious effect upon his morals; he became quite wicked. When he was about sixteen years of age his mother removed to Ohio. Here, about a year afterward, he joined the church and found peace with God. This was in 1805.

And now a great conflict began in his mind. A mysterious voice within continually cried, "Go preach the gospel." Uneducated as he was, and unconscious of the mighty intellectual powers that lay dormant within, he shuddered at the very thought of entering upon a work of such magnitude. For three long years the conflict raged. Finding that he could have no peace so long as he "was disobedient unto the heavenly vision," he finally yielded. He was admitted into the Western Conference in the latter part of 1808. He traveled two years in the Northwest, and was then sent, in 1810, to Mississippi. He had traveled Claiborne and Wilkinson circuits before he came to Natchez. At the close of 1814 he was sent to New Orleans. Here he found it necessary to engage in some secular calling in order to support himself. Accordingly he took a school—the proceeds of which enabled him to hire a preaching-place. From 1815 to 1820 he was local; from 1820 on until his death, which occurred in 1857, he was in the itinerant ranks. During most of this time he was in the presiding eldership. No man ever filled so large a place in Mississippi Methodism.Although, as we have seen, he entered the ministry without education, his diligence in study was such that, at an early period, he took rank with the very foremost

minds in the church. He was about the most omnivorous reader I have ever known anything about. He read the Bible carefully and critically through ninety-nine times. plored every nook and corner of the wide domain of theological literature, and was at home in almost every department of scientific lore. He also read fiction largely. Indeed, there was scarcely any department of learning that he did not invade. His memory was capacious and retentive in a wonderful degree, and his vast stores of knowledge were so classified that they were always ready for use. He was a member of every General Conference from 1824 until his death, and, in the discussions of those stormy times, he bore a conspicuous part. Bishop Paine gives it as his opinion that as a dabater, Winans had no superior. Speaking of his efforts in the General Conference Bishop Paine says: "His language electrified his hearers as his thoughts electrified himself, and so clear, so logical, and so resistless were his arguments, that his conclusions were felt to be demonstrations. His antagonist was impaled and powerless." In this extract Bishop Paine expresses the unanimous opinion of Winan's contemporaries, whether friends or foes. nan's sermons were always argumentative, and were characterized by a remarkable unity of thought. One truth was chosen as his theme, and from first to last every word of his discourse bore directly upon that point. There was never a digression or an irrelevant word. The truth contained in the text was brought out so clearly and vividly that it did not fade from the memory like an ephemeral vision of the night, but, like a view of some magestic temple of the orient, it was indelibly photographed upon memory's tablets. From an early period he was an exceedingly popular preacher, and contrary to the usual course of things, his popularity continued even down to old age. One of our church historians says of him: "Whenever it was known that he was preach, whether on week-day or Sabbath, in city or country, at an Annual or General Conference, he was sure of an unusually large audience." He was a most voluminous writer. I never knew any man to keep so copious a journal. He penned in his journal reflections upon all current events. Not only church affairs, but all the great political and social questions of the day, engaged his thoughts and employed his pen. A volume of his discourses was published during the last years of his life. A flour barrel would hardly contain the manuscripts left at his death. These manuscripts I have seen, though I have not examined them

critically, I give it as my opinion that they contain much matter that is eminently worthy of publication. In the social circle he had all the simplicity and approachability of Benjamin Franklin. He was equally at home in palace and in hovel. Among rich and poor, learned and unlearned he was the same easy, dignified, graceful, self-possessed, agreeable companion. In every thing that pertains to dress he was as regardless of the dictates of fashion as was Horace Greely The Mississippi Conference has never had any other man whose preeminence was so universally conceded, and I doubt if the southern Methodist Church has produced a man who was his superior in intellectual force. He was pastor of the church in Natchez again in 1821, and was presiding elder of a district that included Natchez no less than thirteen years. idence was in Wilkinson county.

- 1815. In 1815 the preacher in charge of Natchez circuit was Rozwell Valentine. Beyond the fact of his pastorate here, I have been unable after diligent search to obtain any information concerning him.
- 1816. In 1816 Natchez circuit had two preachers, James Dixon and John Lane. Dixon was an Irishman, and possessed the usual characteristics of his countrymen—sprightli-

ness, wit, vivacity. He joined the Western Conference in 1810 and traveled circuits in Tennessee, Kentucky and Illinois prior to his coming to this section. He was a man of remarkable gifts, and, moreover, was highly educated. Within five years of the time of his entrance upon the ministry, he became one of the acknowledged champions of the hosts of During his pastorate here his our Israel. health failed, and was never again fully restored. At the close of the year he returned to Tennessee and was for three years on the superannuated list. In 1820 he again took work and was assigned to Knoxville and Greenville but during the year he had a very sudden and singular attack of illness, which deprived him of his memory. He forgot his friends, his name, the alphabet—every thing. He had to begin again the acquisition of knowledge just as an infant does. Within ten years he had acquired sufficient knowledge to enable him to Not long afterwards his malady preach again. returned and his noble mind became a perfect He was sent to the Lunatic Asylum in Nashville where he maintained a sort of vegetative existence until 1849, when he His body reposes in the cemetery at Inscrutable are the ways of Provi-Nashville. Few men of his years gave greater dence.

promise of usefulness than did James Dixon at the time when his eloquent voice was first heard within the walls of Cokesbury Chapel, Natchez. Lane, the senior preacher, was a native of Virginia, but was reared in Georgia. He was thrown upon his own resources at the age of fifteen. His industry, economy and aspirations were such that at the age of twentvtwo he had a very fair education. He now (1813) joined the South Carolina Conference, which then included Georgia. In December, 1815, during the session of the South Carolina Conference, in the city of Charleston, Bishop McKendree called for volunteers for Mississipp; For a preacher or any one else to volunteer to go from South Carolina to Mississippi would now be a very small affair. Then, however, it was a very different matter. Between the white settlements in Georgia and those in Mississippi there was a vast wilderness, hundreds of miles in extent, inhabited by wandering tribes of savages, and these savages were now in a state of hostility to the whites. Moreover. Mississippi was then looked upon by the people of the older States as a huge gravevard, and there was some foundation for this view Malaria was widely prevalent and sickness abounded. Then, the life of an itinerant Methodist preacher was known to be peculiarly

hard in this section. The country being sparsely settled, and the preachers few, the circuits were necessarily of vast extent. Mississippi preacher of that day had usually about three or four rest days in a month. The rest of the time he must travel every day, no matter what might be the state of the weather or how many swollen streams might cross his path. Yet, notwithstanding all this, two brave spirits responded to the Bishop's call—John Lane and Ashley Hewitt. Their journey through the wilderness was full of adventure, hardship and peril; but these we have not time to chronicle. They reached their destination safely, and at once began their arduous toils. From this time on John Lane was a conspicuous figure in Mississippi. In 1821 he located. The circumstances which led to his location were these: He had married a daughter of Rev. Newitt Vick, who owned the land on which the city of Vicksburg now stands. Vick and his wife both died the same day, leaving a family of ten children—none of them of sufficient age to take charge of the estate. made a will, naming Lane as his executor The estate being greatly embarrassed, it was necessary for Lane to give close personal attention to its management. This, of course, he could not do while traveling one of the

circuits or districts of that day. During the next eleven years he was in the local ranks. He laid off the town of Vicksburg, merchandised on a large scale and was also for some vears Probate Judge of Warren county was connected with almost every public enterprise of his city and county, and enjoyed the respect and confidence of the entire community Under his management the Vick estate was relieved of its embarrassments and grew to such proportions as to give each of the ten heirs quite a competency. During all these years he was exceedingly active and useful as a local preacher. But this sort of life did not suit him; he longed to be again in the itinerant ranks. He was readmitted into the Conference in 1832, and from that time until his death no man performed the duties of an itinerant preacher with greater diligence and fidel-These later years of his life were years of trials. Having generously granted the use of his name to his friends too freely, he found himself confronted with security debts to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars—a sum far in excess of his resources. It required years of toil and care and self-denial to meet these obligations; yet meet them he did. Every dollar of these debts was paid. During this long period of financial embarrassment he was sorely tempted to locate; but the temptatation was resisted. He never missed an appointment. No matter what the weather might be; no matter how much high water there was; no matter whether anybody else was there or not, Judge Lane was always at the house of God at the appointed time. He once swam six creeks in one day in order to meet an appointment. He died of vellow fever in 1855. He was a presiding elder during most of the later years of his life. He was also for many years President of the Board of Trustees of Centenary College. Three different times he was honored with a seat in the General He was a man of fine personal Conference appearance, and scrupulously neat in his attire. His social qualities were of the first order; he was dignified without stiffness, and could be mirthful without frivolity. He could adapt himself to any circle into which chance might throw him. His generosity was almost His residence might often have been taken for a hotel, so numerous were his guests; and his hospitalities were so dispensed as to give every one the home feeling. contributed as liberally as his means would allow to benevolent institutions of every kind, and no private claim for charity was ever disregarded. How many orphans he educated

and otherwise befriended; how many widows received from him their daily bread; how many poor preachers were indebted to him for a horse, a suit of clothes, or some other much-needed benefaction, will be known only when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. His servants loved him as a father. death (to use the language of his biographer) "old master was the greatest saint in all their calendar." In his domestic relations he was an example worthy of universal imitation. Around his hearthstone family government might be seen in its perfection. He so ruled his household as to secure obedience, command respect and, at the same time, beget the most devoted affection. His character was one of those symmetrical, well-rounded ones which it is a pleasure to contemplate. His life was a priceless benediction to our Zion. May every reader of these pages gather inspiration therefrom. In the latter part of this year the Mississippi Conference was organized. The preachers in Mississippi had been meeting in a quasi-Conference for three years previous to this: but this was the first legal Mississippi Conference. It was held at the residence of William Foster, six miles northeast of Natchez. Bishop Roberts, then in the first year of his episcopacy, was the presiding officer. The Conference was composed of nine members: Thomas Griffin, John Menifee, John Lane, Ashley Hewitt, Alexander Fleming, Peter James, Elisha Lott, Thomas Nixon and Elijah Gentry—not one of whom is now living. The Mississippi Conference then embraced Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. This territory was divided into two presiding elder's districts—the Mississippi and the Louisiana, with Thomas Griffin and Ashley Hewitt as presiding elders. The number of white communicants in the Conference was 1,706.

1817 During the next two years Natchez circuit was served by John Menifee. Menifee was of an excellent family living near Knoxville, Tenn. He had been traveling in Tennessee and Mississippi four years. At the close of his pastorate here he was appointed presiding elder of the Louisiana district. The next year he was sent to New Orleans, where he died of vellow fever in the very prime and vigor of young manhood. He was a man who gave promise of large usefulness. He was one of the few Methodist preachers of that period who were classical scholars. Just after the close of his pastorate in Natchez he married a daughter of Judge Seth Lewis. He has a daughter still living, the wife of L. D. Huston. During his pastorate Mississippi became a

State, and the capital was removed from Washington. This last measure, of course, sounded the death-knell of Washington. For sixteen years Washington had been a gay, busy, bustling city. With the removal of the capital its glory departed, and it soon became the desolate village we now behold. Of course the church at Washington shared the fortunes of the town itself. This church had been the most flourishing in the whole territory. From this time on it waned, while the church at Natchez increased.

1819. In 1819 Natchez circuit had two pastors—John Lane and John L. McLendon. Lane has already been characterized. Lendon was a mere youth. He located in 1820. Of his subsequent career very little is known, and that little reflects no honor upon his name. He died, I think, about ten years since somewhere in Arkansas. During this year, owing to some excavations being made too near the walls, Cokesbury Chapel fell down, and a rickety old building, just across the street, was fitted up with seats and used for a church during the next four years. This old building was just in the rear of where William Abbot's store now stands.

1820. Lane was continued on the circuit in 1820, and had as an assistant, John Seaton.

1821. In 1821 William Winans was pastor.

1822. In 1822 John Seaton was pastor. Seaton located in 1824. Concerning his subsequent career our annals are silent. The churches at Natchez and Washington had now developed sufficiently to justify a demand for more frequent preaching. Hitherto there had been only monthly appointments. This demand was acceded to, and in 1823 Natchez and Washington was constituted a circuit, of which John C. Burruss was appointed pastor.

1823. John Crenshaw Burruss was born in Caroline county, Va., October 7, 1787. "His parents were nominal members of the Church of England, and he was baptized by a clergyman of that church. I have often heard him speak of the neglect of their flock by these strange shepherds; of their indulgence in card playing and other such amusements, and of the general irreligion of the people in that region until the advent of Asbury and other godly men of the new sect, called Methodists. These Methodists preached wherever a house was opened to them, and a great religious awakening followed their ministrations. John C. Burruss, then a gay, worldly, pleasure-loving and utterly godless young man, was convicted. In great distress he sought the advice

and the prayers of the only deeply pious woman he knew, and she was a Methodist. her house, while the family devotions were being led by a female voice, his sorrow was turned into joy, he knew that God for Christ's sake had pardoned his sins, and he rejoiced aloud. With the ardor and enthusiasm that always characterized him, he mounted his horse the next morning and rode ten miles through a snow-storm to the nearest Methodist society and had his name recorded as a member of that despised and then persecuted sect. family were grieved and astonished beyond measure; but his zeal, tenderness and ardor, his love for God, his evident peace and joy, and the new life which animated him, soon changed opposition into sympathy. In a short time he had the pleasure of seeing his widowed mother, his three sisters and his brothers, all received into the same communion with himself." The above account of his conversion is from the pen of his gifted daughter, Mrs. Judge Edward McGehee. Twelve months after his conversion he was admitted into the Virginia This was in 1814. He remained Conference. in Virginia until 1819, when he removed to North Alabama, having previously located. He continued in the local ranks until 1822, living at Huntsville, Courtland and Russell-

ville, being engaged part of the time in edutional work. In 1822 he became a member of the Mississippi Conterence, which then included Alabama. He was for one year presiding elder of the Canauba district, and then, as before stated, was appointed to Natchez and Washington. Arriving here with his family in April, Burruss entered upon his ministerial labors with great zeal and energy. He was finely educated, and an exceedingly captivating His eloquence attracted immense audiences, and the two churches entered upon a career of great prosperity. This was especially the case at Natchez. During this year a spacious church edifice was built on Union street. Burruss was not content with the usual church services, but preached frequently under the hill, on flatboats, and elsewhere. The yellow fever raged during the summer with such violence as to cause almost an entire suspension of the church services. About this time Elizabeth Female Academy was established at Washington, and, in the fall of 1823, Burruss was elected its President. He accepted the position and retained it until 1828. This was the first Methodist female academy in the Southwest, and was for many years one of the most important educational institutions of Mississippi. Many women who

prominent in our church and in various walks of life received their education here-among them the widow of Bishop Kayanaugh. Notwithstanding his college presidency, Burruss remained in charge of Natchez and Washington until the close of 1824. In the fall of 1823 the Mississippi Annual Conference held its session in Natchez for the first time, Bishop George presiding. Conference had previously met at Washington twice—in 1819 and in 1821. membership of the two churches at the close of 1824 was 164—an increase of thirty on the previous year. Burruss located in the latter part of 1835, having served New Orleans station during that year. From that time until 1845 he lived near Courtland, Ala. From '45 to '48 he lived in Aberdeen, Miss. After 1848 he resided in North Louisiana. Though so long in the local ranks, he did not "neglect the gift that was in him." He availed himself of every opportunity to preach the everlasting gospel; and his ministry was "like a flame of firelight and heat followed his presence everywhere." He died September 4, 1863. cerning his last days his daughter, Mrs. Bishop Parker, writes: "The Civil War then going on caused him terrible mental distress. suffering and loss of life brought about by the war seemed almost to crush his spirit. His

tender, loving nature was utterly overwhelmed by this great national calamity. Every fresh newspaper with details of battles and of loss of life would wring groans from him. His family always felt confident that his days were shortened by his agony over the sorrows and perplexities of this struggle." John C. Burruss was one of the noblest types of Christian manhood. His suavity of temper and courtliness of manner were proverbial wherever he was known, and even far beyond the circle of his personal acquaintance. He was one of the most charming of companions. He seemed to carry a key that unlocked every heart and drew forth its richest treasures of confidence and affection. His matchless social qualities would have ensured his success in the pastorate even if his pulpit abilities had been below mediocrity. But with these most enviable qualities he also possessed oratorical gifts of the first order. He had a voice of almost magical sweetness, and yet of wonderful compass, flexibility and power. His descriptive powers were unsurpassed, and his pathos was often absolutely irresistible.

1824. In 1824 Burruss had as an assistant B. M. Drake Drake was born in North Carolina, September 11, 1800, but was reared in Kentucky He became a member of the

Tennessee Conference in 1820. After traveling two years in Tennessee he was transferred to the Mississippi Conference, and was appointed the first year to Attakapas and Rapides circuit. in Western Louisiana—a very laborious field. In 1825 and 1826 he was missionary to New Orleans. He built the first Methodist Church in that city, and, indeed, the first permanent organization there was effected by him. ing the four years between 1828 and 1832 he was President of Elizabeth Female Academy. and in '28 he was also pastor of the church in He served this church as pastor Natchez. again in 1839 and 1840, and was presiding elder of a district that included Natchez for twelve years. He was a member of every General Conference from 1828 to 1858—an evidence of the high estimation in which he was held by his ministerial brethren. He was also at one time President of Centenary College. Many years of his life were spent in the presiding eldership—a position for which he was eminently fitted, being possessed of fine administrative abilities. He also entered the arena of authorship, publishing biographies of Elijah Steele and Judge Lane. He was a man of tireless energy, unfaltering courage and indomitable will. He maintained through life an enviable reputation for purity of character and entire consecration to the service of God. No influence could turn him from what he believed to be the pathway of duty. In him were happily blended the sternness of John the Baptist and the sweetness of John the Evangelist. His amiability gave him large influence over old and young, and that influence was always wielded in behalf of Christianity in its purest form. He died in 1860, having given to the church forty years of active, useful ministerial service. The annals of the Mississippi Conference contain no name more worthy of posthumous reverence. It is greatly to be regretted that no one has written a biography of this distinguished servant of the church. He was one of the giants of his In the General Conference no member was more indefatigable in his labors in behalf of what he believed to be the true interests of the church. His name will go down to posterity as one of the builders of the ecclesiastical structure known as Southern Methodism. is a fact not generally known that Dr. Drake was the originator of the course of study for our itinerant ministry. The leaders in our Israel all saw the necessity of a higher standard of ministerial culture. Some favored the establishment of a theological training-school as the best means of attaining the desired end.

This Dr. Drake opposed with all his might. He insisted that young men could carry on the work of intellectual culture simultaneously with the work of soul-saving. He argued that if a proper curriculum were prescribed for young preachers, and the compassing of it were made a prerequisite to ordination, then all the benefits of a theological school would be obtained without any of its disadvantages. His counsel prevailed, and a Conference curriculum was prescribed. That this was the wisest course that could have been pursued at that time will scarcely be questioned by any one. Even at the present day when the magnificent portals of Vanderbilt University, like "the happy gates of gospel grace," "stand open night and day." no one thinks of abolishing our Conference course of study or our Conference examining boards.

1825. The pastor in 1825 was Barnabas Pipkin. Pipkin was a rigid disciplinarian. He expelled a number of persons from the church for various offences—one of which was the wearing of costly apparel. This, of course, rendered him unpopular for a time; but nearly all those who were cut off soon returned to the church and afterward lived in conformity with its rules. Pipkin was born in North Carolina in 1795, and became an itinerant

preacher at the age of twenty-three. Like many of our young preachers at that day, he had very little education, having been to school only two months altogether. He carried an English grammar and other text-books around with him in his saddlebags, and made diligent use of his spare time in mastering their contents. For many years he was in the presiding eldership—an office which required him to be absent from home for months at a time. was exceedingly diligent and faithful in his work. During his later years he was on the superannuated list; but, though having no pastoral charge, he preached regularly until within a year of his death. For several years previous to his death he resided in St. Helena parish, La., and no citizen of the parish was more universally esteemed. He died in 1878, at the advanced age of eighty-two, having been in the itinerant ministry nearly sixty years.

1826. The church in Natchez had now grown sufficiently strong to justify its being made into a station, which was done in 1826. It has been a station ever since. So Natchez was, if I mistake not, the first station in the Methodist Church in the Southwest. The first station preacher was Peyton S Greaves—a young man then in the fourth year of his ministry. He was a man of brilliant intellect,

and a very captivating speaker. He remained here only one year. Soon afterward he became a Protestant Methodist. It is said that late in life he returned to the church of his first love, though of this I have no documentary evidence. He died a few years since in Texas. This is the first date at which it is possible to ascertain the membership of Natchez Church, as the reports for all previous years included at least one other church. The number of members at the close of 1826 was 80.

In 1827 W M. Curtis was pastor. He was born in New York in 1798. Having received a good education, he came South, at the age of twenty-two, to engage in teaching. He found employment in his calling in the vicinity of Cane Ridge Church, Jefferson county, Miss., and soon afterward became a member of that church. He joined the Mississippi Conference in 1822. During his pastorate here he was married to Miss Eleanor D. Wailes, of Washington. The Wailes family was one of large celebrity in early times. three following years Curtis was stationed in New Orleans. In '31 he was in Natchez again, and was reappointed in '32; but in May, of that year, he was elected by the General Conference as Agent for the Book Depository in New Orleans, which position he filled during the

next four years. From 1836 to 1850 he was in the local ranks, residing most of the time in New Orleans. As a local preacher, he was abundant in labors. It was largely through his instrumentality that the old Poydras Street Church was built. For a few years previous to 1855 he had charge of Fayette Female Academy, in this State In '55 he again joined the itinerant ranks. He died in Canton, Miss., in 1863. He was a man of most exemplary character in all the relations of life. His widow survived him for several years. She was a woman of unusual intellectual endowments. Her conversational powers were very fine, and she wielded a graceful pen. Her contributions often enriched the columns of the New Orleans Christian Advocate

1828. B. M. Drake was pastor in 1828.

Walker was then in the sixth year of his itinerant ministry. He was a man of great prudence and good sense, and possessed social qualities which added largely to his influence. He was, moreover, a man of very fine preaching abilities. He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1832. He was in Natchez only one year. He was afterward stationed in Mobile and Tuscaloosa. In 1834, much to the surprise and regret of his numerous friends he located and became a commission merchant in the city of New Orleans. Those who knew him during his itinerancy believe that had he remained in the pastorate he would have taken very high rank in the church.

1830. The pastor in 1830 was O. L. Nash. He was born in North Carolina, in 1802. After receiving a tair education he commenced preaching at the age of twenty-three. During his stav in Natchez he was married to Miss Maria Overaker, one of the most amiable young ladies in the city. The next year he was stationed in New Orleans. In 1853 he was again stationed in Natchez, and died here August 8. His remains repose in our city The church has rarely had a more cemetery thoroughly consecrated minister. No labor was too great for him to perform in behalf of the church. His ministry here was quite successful. His deathbed scene was a verification of the poet's words—

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate

Is privileged beyond the common walks of life,

Quite in the verge of heaven."

His last vocal utterances were the words of inspiration: "I have fought a good fight," etc.

1831. In '31 W M. Curtis was pastor.

During this year Dr. H. B. Bascom, then the Cicero of the American pulpit, visited Natchez, preaching and lecturing several times, and exciting great enthusiasm by his marvelous eloquence

1832. Curtis was re-appointed in '32; but in May the General Conference appointed him to take charge of the Book Depository in New Orleans. His place was filled during the remainder of the year by a beardless youth whose name was destined soon to become one of the most illustrious in our annals. I refer to Dr. C. K. Marshall. He was even then, although a mere tyro, a brilliant and attractive preacher. His ministry here was eminently successful. There were 85 additions to the membership. The number of members at the close of the year was 122. A very strong effort was made by the church to have him returned the following year; but Bishop Soule thought every young preacher ought to travel a country circuit for one year at least, and so the coming D. D. was turned loose upon a huge circuit in Warren county -the only circuit he ever trayeled. Marshall's subsequent career is too well known to need mention here. Everybody knows that he very soon became one of the celebrities of the Southern pulpit, and that he has for years had a national, and even more

than a national, reputation.

1833. In 1833 John O. T. Hawkins was appointed to Natchez: but he remained only until March. Hawkins was a man of immense intellectual endowments and prodigious capabilities for usefulness; but, alas! alas! he made shipwreck of the faith and came to an untimely end. He located at the close of 1833, and, having been addicted to drink previous to his conversion, he now fell into his former evil habits and was soon afterward killed in a drunken row somewhere in Kentucky—probably in Frankfort. What a commentary upon the words of Scripture, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest Some of those who knew Hawkins he fall." well believe that had he remained in the ministry, and been a man of one work, he might have rivalled Bascom in oratorical fame. Hawkin's unexpired term was filled by F A. Owen, who was also pastor during the next vear, 1834.

1834. Owen was a man of fine appearance; neat in his attire, polished in his manners, and in every respect an elegant gentleman. He was also a good preacher and a man of well-rounded character. Some years after this he filled the honorable and responsible position of Agent for our Publishing House, at Nash-

ville. During the later years of his life he was in the pastorate in the city of St. Louis. He died in '82, having completed a laborious and useful ministry of sixty years. During the year 1834 Bishop McKendree spent about three weeks in Natchez. The minutes show that he was present at a Quarterly Conference held during that time. He preached twice, administered the sacrament and spent much time in visiting the poorer members. He also counseled Owen to preach in private houses and on flatboats. The good old Bishop died soon after his return to Tennessee; so that Natchez had the privilege of sitting under his ministry during his last days. It throws some light upon the ecclesiastical methods of the period to know that a woman was expelled from the church for quarreling with a neighbor.

1835. During this year R. D. Smith was in the pastorate. Smith was a native of Pennsylvania, and was born in 1892. He came to Mississippi in 1824, and was engaged for two years or more in teaching in Wilkinson county. He joined the Mississippi Conference in 1828. For nearly three years he labored as a missionary to the Choctaw Indians. After their removal west of the Mississippi river he was stationed successively at Montgomery, Mobile. Vicksburg and New Orleans prior to

his coming to Natchez. He continued actively engaged in the ministry up to the time of his death, which occurred in Vicksburg, in 1845. He was considerably above mediocrity as a preacher and as a pastor had few superiors. He was a man of remarkable amiability He organized our present Sundayschool Missionary Society, which, according to Bishop Wilson, is the oldest society of its kind in the Southern Methodist Church.

The next pastor was Thomas Ford. He had been preaching only a short time, and he retired from the itinerant ranks soon after After his location he was engaged in agricultural pursuits near Clinton, Miss. was a successful planter, and at the breaking out of the late Civil War had acquired a considerable estate. At his home he dispensed a most generous hospitality. In person he was tall, erect, well formed and attractive; in his bearing a perfect specimen of the old Virginia gentleman. I had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him in the later years of his life, and I do not think I ever knew a man who was a more perfect embodiment of all those noble qualities that are expressed in the phrase—a Christian gentleman. He was active and useful as a local preacher; but I can not refrain from expressing the opinion that he

made a great mistake in retiring from the itinerant ranks. All the qualities of head and heart that ensure success in the pastorate he possessed in the greatest abundance. During this year the world-renowned John Newland Maffit spent several months in Natchez, editing a paper, called The Christian Herald, which was the official organ of the Mississippi Annual Conference. He conducted for several weeks a series of services which were attended by vast crowds of people of all sects and creeds. The result of the meeting was a great revival which reached and vastly benefited all the churches of the city Among the accessions to our church during that meeting was Robert J. Walker, afterward U. S. Senator, and Secretary of the Treasury under Polk's admin-It is said that in his later years he fell into immoral practices. However that may be, it is certain that during the several years that he remained at Natchez he was a regular attendant at church and class meeting, and his daily walk was in conformity with the requirements of the Divine word. Our membership had now increased to 156. Maffit was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1794. He was converted and joined the Methodists at the age of nineteen, and very soon afterward announced it as his intention to enter the ministry

family, who were members of the Establishment, opposed this with such violence as to cause him to emigrate to America. From 1822 to 1832 he was a member of the New England Conference, and during this period acquired extensive fame as an orator. During the next year he made New York his headquarters; but, being now in the local ranks, he traveled largely in various sections, preaching and lecturing and attracting a large share of public attention. In '33, in conjunction with Lewis Garrett, he founded, at Nashville, the Western Methodist, which was adopted as the organ of the Tennessee Conference. Its name was afterward changed to The Christian Advocate. the fall of '33 he joined the Tennessee Conference, and was appointed Agent for LaGrange College. He was continued in this position for three successive years. This agency imposed upon him no territorial restrictions. He had the continent before him as a field of operations. It was while he was in this agency that he sojourned in Natchez. In the fall of '36 he located. For several years subsequent to this he traveled largely and preached to vast multitudes. In many of our cities he held meetings of several weeks' duration, and was the means of awakening and converting, perhaps, thousands of persons. In '41 he was

chaplain to Congress. After the expiration of his chaplaincy his labors were confined mainly to the Southwest. He died near Mobile, Ala., in May, 1850. Few men have had larger fame for pulpit oratory than did Maffit in his prime. He had a fine figure, an exceedingly handsome face, a rich, melodious, magnetic voice and a fluency of speech that was absolutely marvelous. All the rich and varied resources of the English tongue were at his command. And the splendor of his diction did not surpass the beauty and brilliancy of his imagery Figures of sparkling beauty fell from his lips as naturally as water gushes from a fountain. Moreover, there was often running through his discourses a vein of pathos that was exquisitely tender. And yet, notwithstanding his wonderful oratorical gifts, he had peculiarities that detracted from his influence and greatly diminished his usefulness vectives against evil-doers were so severe and his sarcasm so terrible that wherever he went he almost invariably excited the most virulent opposition. He was often threatened with mob violence, and attempts were sometimes made to put these threats into execution; yet, as it usually turns out in such cases, he was unharmed. In social life he was exceedingly free, easy and familiar, and was often guilty of

indiscretions which furnished the tongue of calumny with admirable texts to preach from. His evening sky was overspread with clouds of gloom. It is thought by those best acquainted with the facts that he died of a broken heart.

In 1837 Robert Alexander was sta-1837 tioned here. He did not, however, remain all the year. Texas was then an inviting field for missionary labor, and our Bishops, having determined to occupy it, Alexander was sent there in August. For forty years he was an honored leader of the hosts of our Israel in that great commonwealth. He was a member of every General Conference from the organization of the Texas Conference until his death, which occurred a very few years since. His unexpired term was filled by a youth who afterward became one of the celebrities of our Southern pulpit. I refer to Dr. Jefferson Hamilton. His subsequent labors were principally confined to the State of Alabama, where his name became a household word in all Methodist circles. Our church has produced few, if any, better specimens of Christian manhood than Dr. Jefferson Hamilton.

1838. The next incumbent of the pastorate was Elias R. Porter—Though not a very scholarly pastor, he was a man of brilliant

intellect and superior oratorical powers. He was also exceedingly attractive in the social circle. He joined the itinerancy in 1831. He filled several important positions in the Conference, but, like Walker and others, located while in the very prime of life, and with brilliant prospects for usefulness before him. This was in 1844. He married a niece of Judge Edward McGehee. He lived for several years in Wilkinson county; but afterward removed to Louisiana, where he died some years since.

B. M. Drake was pastor during the In May, 1840, Natchez was next two years. visited by that fearful tornado which has passed into history as one of the most destructive ever known in the South. Precisely how many lives were lost has never been ascertained, but the number was great and the loss of property immense. The church edifice was so seriously damaged that it could not be occupied for about a year. How many of our members perished in the storm I have been unable to ascertain; but the number was doubtless considerable, as the published minutes show a membership of only 135 at the close of the year against 160 at the beginning.

1841 In 1841 the church was under the pastorate of William Langarl—a young man of quite mediocre abilities, but deeply pious, and

thoroughly consecrated to his work. He was, however, an Abolishionist, and, on account of his anti-slavery sentiments, went to Ohio at the close of the year. He was carried away by the craze of Millerism.

Richmond Randle was the next 1842. pastor. He transferred at the close of the next year to the Louisiana Conference, of which he was an active, useful member as long as he lived. He was in the presiding eldership for a number of years, and was a member of the General Conference of 1850. Though not a man of liberal education, his ministry was a decidedly successful one, resulting in the enlargement of the borders of our Zion in his various fields of labor. He died, 1861, in the Confederate States Army, where he had gone to pay a visit to his sons, who were wearing the grey. He has two sons who are members of the Louisiana Conference.

1843. In '43 and '44 the church was under the pastoral care of S. W Speer. Soon after the expiration of his pastorate Dr. Speer took charge of a female high school in this city, and presided over it for several years. Quite a number of our prominent Natchez ladies were educated in this school. Speer afterward went into the pastorate and transferred to Kentucky, where he still lives and labors. He is quite

scholarly, and a preacher of considerable force. He has rendered efficient service in Kentucky as a defender of the doctrines of our church. He is now in his fourth year's pastorate at Newcastle, Ky., and is greatly beloved by his flock. He was a member of the General Conference of 1882.

Benjamin Jones was appointed to Natchez in 1845 and reappointed in 1846. is still living and still actively engaged in the work of the ministry in our own Conference. He has served many of our most important circuits, stations and districts. He was also at one time President of Port Gibson Female College. He is a man of clear, vigorous mind, and a very diligent, faithful pastor. He is remarkably precise and methodical in all his labors. Under his pastorate the church prospered greatly. The membership increased largely, and the number of Sunday-school pupils went up from sixty-seven to ninety The church was thoroughly united, and was noted throughout the Conference for its piety and liberality The ladies of the church were engaged in a singular sort of benevolent work. Many of our circuit preachers being poorly paid, our Natchez ladies organized and kept up for several years a sewing society for the benefit these impecunious preachers. Clothing—especially underwear—was sent every year to the Annual Conference.

1847 The next pastor was Calvin A. Frazee—a man of fine scholastic attainments and considerable gifts as a speaker. He had, however, some eccentricities which crippled his usefulness. He was stationed at Jackson in '48 and '49. He then transferred to Louisiana, and soon afterward located. He married a granddaughter of Judge Seth Lewis, and resided near Opelousas until his death, which occurred only a few years since.

J. L. Forsythe served the church as pastor during the next two years. He is a native of "Erin's green isle;" but came to America in early life. The early years of his ministry were spent in Missouri. While laboring there he was the instrument employed by the Spirit of Truth in the awakening and conversion of one who was destined to acquire national fame. I refer to our beloved Bishop Marvin. He is still actively engaged in the itinerant ministry. His ministry here was quite successful. During his second year a revival began at a watch-night service and continued throughout the year. Congregations were large and remarkably attentive and serious. There were in the church at that time fifteen men and ten women who would take up the cross of praying in public. The membership included forty widows, and, as they were mostly poor, the plan was adopted of taking weekly collections for the support of the pastor. The Sunday-school increased its numerical strength to 131 pupils and 24 teachers. It was then the largest Sunday-school in the Conference

1850. Forsythe was succeeded by Levi Pearce—a good preacher and a fine pastor, a man eminently suited to carry on the revival which was in progress at the commencement of his pastorate. Forsythe remained for two weeks or more after the Conference adjourned and assisted the new pastor in a protracted meeting which resulted in about one hundred The membership at the close of conversions. this year was 252, and there were 200 pupils and 29 teachers in the Sunday-school. During this year a very important enterprise was initiated, viz: that of building a parsonage. The lot was donated by Peter Little. A sufficient amount of money was raised to secure the erection of the elegant two-story brick building on Broadway, now occupied as a residence by Judge Hiram R. Steele The building was not completed until the next year. Levi Pearce is still living; but has been for several years on the superannuated list. He removed soon after the close of the war of secession to Honduras, where he still resides. He is engaged in agriculture, and has in this way acquired considerable wealth.

In 1851 Pearce was succeeded by H. Watkins, who also remained during W the next year. The church was now eminent-Many were added to its memly prosperous. bership during this pastorate. Dr. Watkins was pastor of this church fourteen years between 1850 and 1873. I deem it unnecessary to say much in these pages concerning the life or character of Dr. Watkins, for the reason that his biography has been written by the facile, vigorous pen of Rev T. L. Mellen, and will be published during the present year. Suffice it to say that in courtliness of manners, in vigor of intellect, in purity of character and in pulpit ability he had no superior among us. In him were united all the elements of a noble Christian manhood. He was a man who would have graced any ministeral position—even the Episcopacy. His biography, I am glad to say, will contain some fine specimens of his homiletical skill.

1853. The next pastor was O. L. Nash, who, as I have already stated, died here during the year. His unexpired term was filled by John G. Jones, whose name is a familiar one to

Methodists throughout Mississippi. John G. Jones became a member of the Mississippi Conference in December, 1824, and his connection with it has been unbroken from that time until the present. He was for a long period an incumbent of the presiding elder's office, and has been several times elected by his ministerial brethren to a seat in our ecclesiastical legislature. He has acquired durable fame as an author. His published works are a treatise on dancing, "Bishop's Council," and "The Introduction of Protestantism into the Southwest." He has written a history of Methodism in Mississippi; but it has not yet been published. This work is replete with most interesting information concerning our fathers in Israel. That it will be published some day I have no doubt, and it will be an imperishable monument to the memory of our venerable brother who for sixty years has borne aloft the blood-stained banner of the cross.

1854. In '54 Dr. Watkins was pastor. He was succeeded in '55 by A. T. M. Fly, the father of our esteemed fellow-citizen, James M. Fly, Principal of Rural Female Seminary.

1855. Fly was a man eminent for his piety and zeal and his thorough consecration to his sacred calling. He added more members

to the church than any other pastor had ever done. As a rule, he opened the doors of the church every Sabbath, and his invitations were usually responded to. Before the first of August he had received into the church at the ordinary services thirty-six persons. August 12 he commenced a series of daily services which lasted three weeks, closing on September 5. During that time 129 persons were received into the church, making 165 in all; and a large percentage of these professed to have found the priceless pearl of conscious salvation. About the time this meeting closed the yellow fever broke out in the city and raged with unusual violence for three months. The pastor remained at his post—visiting the sick, burying the dead and attending faithfully to all the duties of his holy calling—until he himself was smitten by the plague. was a brief period of suffering, and then all was over. His death occurred on October 1. He died where every man should wish to die at the post of duty The memory of his active, helpful ministry vet lingers in many hearts among us like the aroma of a departed flower. His ashes rest in our city of the dead. number of members at the close of the year was 293.

1856. Dr. Watkins was pastor during the

next two years. During this period the lot on which our present church edifice stands was purchased from the estate of Valentine Rover for the sum of \$1,100, and subscriptions were taken for the erection of a church; but the amount of the subscriptions was insufficient to build such a house as was desired. Hence nothing came of the movement except the possession of the lot. This is the first date at which it is possible to ascertain the amount of the pastor's salary, which was \$1,721. In '56 Dr. Watkins was assisted by Robert W Lambuth, a brother of J W Lambuth, our Robert W Lambuth missionary to China. was then quite a vouth. He was one of the most amiable, sweet-spirited He seemed to carry a key ever knew. that would unlock every heart and take possession of its confidences. His career was short. He was cut off by disease in the very prime of young manhood's powers, leaving an aching void in the hearts of all who knew him.

1858. We now come to the saddest chapter by far in the entire history of the church. Hitherto, whatever vicissitudes the church had passed through—whatever decimation it had suffered from storm and epidemic whatever fluctuations there had been in its picty, zeal and aggressiveness—there had been

peace and harmony within its pales. Now, however, we are to contemplate the melanch oly spectacle of a church shorn of its strength by the Delilah of internal discord. At the session of the Mississippi Conference, held in the fall of 1857, there appeared a stranger, from Iowa. bearing the name of James P Linderman. He had a certificate showing that he had been a member of the Iowa Conference, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. On that certificate he was received into the Mississippi Conference. He was appointed to preach during the session of the Conference, and his sermon was of such a character as to captivate the entire audiencepreachers and all. He was thought to be the very man for Natchez, which was then the most important station in the Conference, and was accordingly sent here. His pastorate began most auspiciously. The fame of his gifts as a speaker spread far and wide, and great crowds sat under his ministry revival soon began of greater magnitude than had ever been witnessed in this city, with the single exception of Fly's revival. Including those who had joined before the revival commenced, there were 148 additions to our membership, and the work was not confined to our own church. Sixty members were received into the Presbyterian Church at one time,

and all the Protestant Churches became beneficiaries of the mighty work of grace. But, with all his zeal, brilliancy and force. Linderman had idiosyncrasics which alienated from him many of the leading members of the church. Thus there arose in the church and out of it a Linderman party and an anti-Linderman party, and these factions grew more and more belligerent until the effect was disastrous in the extreme. The church began at once to decline in numbers, and continued to do so steadily for fourteen years. membership, which during this year-'58numbered 448, had dwindled in '68 to 150, and of this number many were held to the church by a very feeble cord. Of course other causes contributed to this decline. The war came during this period, and every one knows the disastrous effects of war upon church lifeespecially in a city occupied, as this was, by a hostile army But, after all proper allowances are made for the operation of other causes, it must be admitted that this decline is more largely due to the sequences of the Linderman. pastorate than to all other causes combined. Then it was that the demon of discord first entered the fold. Is it not wonderful that such a retrogade movement should begin in the very midst of a sweeping revival? What a

proof of Satanic power and sagacity! Well does the arch-fiend know the truth of the poet's words: "The sheep he never can devour unless he first divide!" Lest some one should suppose that what has been said above is intended as an aspersion upon Linderman's moral character, I will here state that the Mississippi Annual Conference, in the session held at the close of the year, after an investigation of the facts in the case, passed a resolution, expressing the opinion that Linderman had long been subject to spells of mental aberration, and that his idiosvncrasies were attributable to this It is said—though I know not whether the statement is well authenticated—that Linderman died in a lunatic asylum somewhere in the Northwest.

Wheat, who had as an assistant R. B. Downer—then in the first year of his itinerant ministry—From what has been said above the reader will not expect to hear much that is cheering during the next several pastorates. Our work is to trace the gradual decline. At the close of this year the number of members was 317—a decrease of 123—and many of these were quite lukewarm in their attachment to the church. Still there was a goodly number of faithful men and women who labored

arduously for the prosperity of Zion. attended the class meetings and prayer meetings as well as the preaching. The Sundayschool, though not so large as formerly, was in a very healthy condition. During this year the pastoral work was done principally by the junior preacher, the senior spending his time mostly in his study. The junior, besides doing great deal of house-to-house preached frequently in private of the city remote from the parts church — especially under the hill. Healso preached regularly to the p ople, and frequently occupied the pulpit on Sabbath night. J. J. Wheat is a native of Copiah county, Miss. At a very early age he evinced a remarkable fondness for books. would carry a book in his pocket to the field and would read at every idle moment. would sometimes hold a book open with one hand while he guided the plow with the other. He would also sit up to a very late hour of the night reading, after having followed the plow all day He was after awhile sent off to school by the Presbyterian Church, and educated for the ministry in that church. After he had completed his education his theological views underwent such a change that he could not conscientiously minister at its altars.

therefore, went to the proper authorities and proposed to give them his note for the amount which had been expended in his education, promising to pay it as soon as he could. however, very generously refused to accept any remuneration and bade him God-speed inthe ministry of our church. Most of his life has been spent in educational work. was professor of Greek at Centenary College in '60 and '61. Ever since the close of the late war he has filled the Greek professorship in our State University, at Oxford. As a preacher his efforts are far from being uniform. revival meetings and on other occasions when the preaching mood is on him he sometimes preaches with a pathos that is overwhelming. R. B. Downer is a native of Indiana, and was born in '38. He was, therefore, only twenty years of age at the time of his pastorate here. Though a man of very frail physique, he has continued to the present time in the itinerant work. He is a man of sterling integrity and deep piety. His sermons are well arranged and full of vigorous thought.

1860. In 1860 the church was served by W. G. Millsaps, a young man of good education and vigorous intellect, who gave promise of large usefulness. That promise would doubtless have been realized had he been a man of

one work; but, alas! he soon became secularized and, moreover, was for a time immersed in politics. Thus his energies have been largely expended in labors other than those of his sacred calling, and he has not accomplished half the good that a man of his abilities should have accomplished. He is again in the itinerant ranks, but in too feeble health to render efficient service. Should a gracious Providence restore him to vigorous health, he may yet gather many sheaves for the Master's garner.

1861. In '61 and '62 Dr. Watkins was pastor The war was now in progress, and this facilitated ecclesiastical retrogression. The Sunday-school, which some years before numbered 200 pupils, could now muster only 8). The pastor's salary had fallen from \$1,700 to \$1,350. Other interests languished in a like degree.

1863. In '63 and '64 the pastor was Geo. H. Clinton. These were troublous times. After July, '63, the city was occupied by Federal troops, and many of our families were refugees in distant regions. Clinton's ministry was as successful as it could well have been in such unpropitious times. His congregations were remarkably large, and thirty-four persons were added to the church in '63. Fearing

that an order issued by Secretary Stanton would cause his arrest, Clinton left the city in May, '64, and did not return. Dr. Watkins. whose residence was in the city, occupied the pulpit the remainder of the year. Clinton remained a few years after this in the Mississippi Conference, and then became pastor of our most important church in St. Louis. He remained there about three or four years, and then died in the very prime of life. He was a man remarkable both for sweetness of disposition and purity of character—a man who had more friends and fewer enemies, more virtues and fewer faults, that almost any one I have ever known. His preaching was singularly Though not remarkable for a proattractive. fundity of thought, his arrangement was so natural, his diction so chaste and elegant, his imagery so beautiful and his delivery so exquisite that his discourses possessed an almost irresistible charm. His early death is another one of those inscrutable providences in the presence of which it behooves us to say: "His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts."

1865. During the next two years Dr. Watkins had pastoral charge again. There was no Quarterly Conference held from May, '64 to June, '65. The Sunday-school, however.

was kept up all the while through the fidelity and zeal of D. R. Gunning and Mrs. Ann Harris. During this pastorate the church. resolved to sell its house of worship on Union street and build another on the spot on which our present church edifice stands. Accordingly the building was sold to the African Methodist Episcopal Church for the sum of \$9,000. Only about \$6,000 of this, however, was ever paid. The building was burned soon afterward, and, as the purchasers were not in a financial condition to bear so heavy a loss, the claim for the remainder was relinguished. The elegant parsonage on Broadway, now the property of Judge H. R. Steele, was also sold for the sum of \$9,000. It was repurchased by the church in 1870, but immediately resold for \$10,000. The old house of worship having been disposed of, and another one not having been built, the church was houseless for the period of five years. The Baptist Church, however, being without a pastor, very generously tendered its house of worship. The offer. was, of course, gratefully accepted. Presbyterian Chapel was occupied during a portion of this time

1867 In 1867 W E. M. Linfield was pastor. He was also reappointed in 1868, but owing to ill health, removed from the city

before the end of the year. Under his ministry several persons were brought into the church who have since been among our most active and useful members, and yet our numerical strength at the close of his term was only 150 a decrease of $66\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. in one decade. Dr. Linfield was a native of South Carolina. When the Mexican War broke out, although a mere stripling, he became a volunteer and rendered valiant service in battling for the stars and stripes. He had been preaching about fifteen years in Alabama and Louisiana before coming In 1861, when William Tecumseh Sherman resigned the presidency of the Louisiana State Military School to accept a commission in the United States Army, Dr. Linfield was chosen as his successor. He filled the position for some time. Most of his life subsequent to his pastorate here was spent in the presiding eldership. He was several times honored with a seat in the General Conference. He was a man of remarkably vigorous intellect, and a preacher of rare ability. He had several sermons that were homiletical masterpieces. Finer specimens of pulpit eloquence it would be hard to find. He died at Hazlehurst, Miss., in 1882, at the age of fifty-eight. During the evening of his life affliction threw its dark shadow athwart his pathway. For two years

before his death he was an intellectual imbecile.

1869. From 1869 to 1872 Dr. W H. Watkins was pastor. During this period our present house of worship was projected, and was so far completed that the basement was in use during the latter part of 1872. The very wise plan was adopted of having no work done until there was money in the treasury to pay for it. The salary of the pastor at this time was \$1,200. Usually only about half of it was paid.

1873. Having traced a constant decline extending through a period of fourteen years, it is gratifying to reach again a period of growth. During the next four years W L. C. Hunnicutt had pastoral charge. The church has rarely, if ever, had a more diligent, faithful pastor. He visited much from house to house. He sought out those who had become alienated from the church and induced them again to attend its services. Many names of disaffected and non-attending members had under former pastorates been stricken from the These he influenced in many instances to return to the church. He also gave special attention to the lambs of the flock, and sought to impress upon them the importance of giving attention to their personal salvation. At the

close of 1876 the membership had increased to During this period services were held in the basement, though considerable progress had been made in the work of fitting up the main audience-room. It was floored and plastered, and the windows and pulpit were purchased and put in place. At this time there occurred an instance of devotion to the church which is worthy of It being found very difficult to mention. defray current expenses and at the same time carry on projected improvements on the building, it was resolved by the stewards that they would save the amount of the sexton's salary by performing the duties of a sexton themselves, which they did—each one serving a month at a time. The pastor's salary was \$1,320, which was paid every year except the last, when the pastor relinguished \$100 of his claim.

1877. From 1877 to 1880 R. S. Woodward was pastor. His pastorate was such a recent one that I need say very little of him personally. His genial face is familiar to every citizen of Natchez. During the four years of his ministry here his urbane manners and fine social qualities endeared him not only to his own flock, but also to many members of other communions. His mellifluous voice was often heard in other pulpits than our own.

There were 51 accessions to the church during his pastorate, and yet the losses by death, removal, and otherwise, more than counterbalanced these gains, leaving a membership of 210 at the close of his term. During this period the church again came into possession of a parsonage. For more than ten years the pastor had occupied a rented house. Miss Amelia Tooley, daughter of Rev Henry Tooley, donated to the church the house now occupied as a parsonage on condition that an annuity of \$180 should be paid her during life. The condition was accepted and the building at once occupied as a parsonage. The task of completing our house of worship was vigorously prosecuted; but, as the building had been projected on an expensive scale, and as the congregation was far from being a wealthy one, the work progressed slowly. The main audience-room was occupied in 1877, though not supplied with its full quota of pews. The pastor's salary was \$1,000, and was paid in full.

We must now make brief mention of a few of those who have labored among us as local preachers:

'23-'48. First among these comes Henry He was born in North Carolina, in 1773, and became a citizen of Natchez in 1823. He resided here until his death, which occurred in 1848. He was a physician, but had retired from practice before coming to Natchez. was a fine Greek and Hebrew scholar, and was also learned in the sciences. For a number of years he held the office of magistrate. placed in this office because he was thought to be just the sort of man whose services were needed at that time. For some time before his removal here Natchez had had an unenviable reputation for lawlessness. Roughs and rowdies had their own way The good citizens grew tired of this state of things, and, after counseling together, decided that Dr. Tooley was the man best fitted to undertake the work They were not mistaken in their of reform. He at once became a terror to "evilchoice. He inaugurated a detective system doers."

which brought to the tribunal of justice the perpetrators of all manner of secret villainies, and almost every offender got the benefit of the heaviest penalty prescribed by the law effect of his course was salutary in the Order and tranquility resumed their extreme. sway. No citizen of that day was so largely a benefactor to the city of Natchez, though, of course, he could not have accomplished this work of reform without the cordial support of the leading citizens of the town. His views concerning the administration of church law were equally rigid. So far as his influence could shape the action of the church, no one was allowed to remain within its pales whose life was out of harmony with the principles of New Testament morality even in their minutia. As a preacher, Tooley was erudite and instructive rather than showy or brilliant. died at the advanced age of seventy-five. exit from earth was exceedingly peaceful and triumphant.

'18-'60. Another local preacher who was connected with this church for a long period of time was James Carson. He was a native of Ireland, and was born in 1776. He was brought into the church at a very early age under the ministry of John Wesley He became a preacher at the age of twenty-five. In 1803

he came to America and settled in the city of New York, where he lived until 1818, when he removed to Natchez. From that date until his death, in 1860, he was one of the pillars of our Zion in this community He was a man of considerable literary attainments, and a most diligent student of the word of God. His preaching was solid and thoroughly evangelical. He was a man of stern integrity and of great amiability Although a staunch Methodist, he had none of that narrow sectarian bigotry which can see no good in other com-In old age he was so exceedingly deaf that he could not hear preaching; yet his place was never vacant in the house of God. He attended church regularly for ten years without hearing a word of the service. Though possessed of a very irascible temper, he had so completely brought his emotional nature under the dominion of his religious principles that he became noted for patience, meekness and magnanimity. He cherished through life a very remarkable fondness for children. Even in the decrepitude of age he was bright, cheerful and affectionate in such a degree as to captivate the heart of childhood. juvenile circles "Grandpa Carson" was a universal favorite.

'49-'65. Another local preacher who was

connected with this church for several years was W C. Chamberlin. He was one of our leading merchants from 1849 until the close of the late war. He was not a man of great force in the pulpit, but was nevertheless exceedingly useful. He loved the church, contributed liberally to all its enterprises and labored assiduously to promote its welfare. He superintended the Sunday-school for a number of years and also filled various other official positions. After leaving Natchez he was engaged in commercial enterprises in Crystal Springs, Miss., and in New Orleans. He died some years since. He was the father of Corvdon Chamberlin, of whom I shall have something to say on another page.

'45-'50. Benjamin Walker is another name worthy of honorable mention. His ministerial career was of short duration, beginning in '45 and terminating with his life in '.05. He had, however, been a very active, useful official in the church for ten years previous to this. His talents were not above mediocrity, but he used them to the best possible advantage. He was always doing something for the church, and regretting that he could not do more. He preached a great deal to the colored people, and also had regular appointments in the country

'36-'52. William Vancampen was a local preacher in this church from '36 to '52. He does not seem to have been specially useful as a preacher, but was quite active and efficient as a class leader and in other official capacities.

The following are the names of other local preachers who have labored among us: Miles Harper, W. N. R. Lane, Giles M. Campbell, S. P. N. Gillespie, Samuel Baird, — McKinney, John Dixon, E. L. Robinson, Jackson Warner, Thomas Renney and S. L. Guise. Several of these were here but a very short time. Others, however, remained longer and were zealous and diligent. Among them was S. L. Guise—only recently gone to his reward. Many of these local preachers rendered efficient service as stewards, trustees and class leaders. Lane and Harper had been members of the Mississippi Conterence for several years.

The following deceased official members merit special mention because of their devotion to the church, viz: George J. Dicks, Christopher Miller, David F. Miller, John M. Lawrence, D. L. Rivers, Joseph Wer, Miles Owen, Richmond Bledsoe, W. R. Winston, Edward Winston, William Harris, T. A. S. Doniphan, W. P. Mellen, Richard Bache, C. S. Magown and D. G. Renner. George J. Dicks was an active, diligent official from 1832 to 1874.

Christopher Miller served the church in some official capacity from 1823 until his death in 1854. He was a man who wielded extensive influence, as were others of those above mentioned. (For a full list of official members see Appendix C.)

This church has had a number of female members conspicuous for their piety, zeal and Prominent among these is the usefulness. name of Eliza Little, after whom our Sundayschool is named—she having been mainly instrumental in its organization. Her social qualities were such as to give her great influence over the young, and this influence she invariably wielded in behalf of Christianity She was acquainted with almost all the young people in the city, and her spacious parlors were often thrown open for their entertainment; and, although wine, cards, dancing and all amusements of doubtful propriety were rigidly excluded, yet there was no lack of enjoyment. Her art of influencing the young amounted to consummate generalship.

Mrs. Walker, wife of Hon. Robert J. Walker, deserves special mention because of her example in one respect. She, as well as Walker himself, was one of Maffit's converts. Before her conversion she was a very gav, dressy woman, fond of all the frivolities of

fashionable life. After her conversion she became a meek, humble Christian, willing to labor in any way for the advancement of the cause of Christ. She spent much time in visiting the poor and looking after their wants. Out of regard for their feelings, she laid aside her elegant silks and appeared at church arrayed in calico. Elsewhere than in the house of God she dressed to suit her own taste. Hers is an example worthy of imitation by wealthy Christian women of every denomination. The good that would result from the general adoption of such a practice is incalculable. All over this land thousands are kept from the sanctuary of the living God because they can not endure the contrast between their attire and that of their more affluent neighbors. You may say that this is a weakness and a sin, if you choose; but that does not alter the sad fact; and the principle which induced Paul to abstain from harmless meat out of regard for a brother's weakness certainly justifies and encourages the laying aside of costly attire on the Sabbath day from a like motive. Moreover, as a general rule, those who are swiftest to denounce this weakness of the poorer classes would act in the same way themselves under the same circumstances. Natchez did not long enjoy the benefit of the labors of this noble

Christian woman. Walker was in the U. S. Senate from 1837 to 1845, and Secretary of the U. S. Treasury from '45 to '49. He resided at Washington, practicing his profession, long after this time. It is gratifying to know that, amid all the temptations to worldliness incident to high life in our national capital, Mrs. Walker maintained her Christian integrity, her devotion to the church and her willingness to make sacrifices for the good of others. She survived her illustrious consort, and continued to reside in Washington City until her death, which occurred in 1875. She passed away in joyful hope of a blissful immortality. May her mantle fall on others!

Although my limits will not permit me to characterize all the elect ladies of our Israel, yet my duty as a historian would not be fully discharged were I to fail to make honorable mention of the following: Sarah Cecil, Mary Reed, Ann Harris, Elizabeth Bledsoe, Harriet Baker, Sarah M. Trayhern, Mary Irvine, Letitia Harrison, Agnes Glover, Sarah C. Mellen, Julia Abbey, Sarah Mathieson, Eliza Carson. These all loved the church and labored variously to promote its welfare. Several of them were women of considerable gifts and great force of character. Having borne the cross, they now wear the crown.

We have at the present time a band of pious, godly women who love the church and are abundant in labors in its behalf.

This church has a good record in the matter of sending out preachers. Whether there were any preachers licensed by this church prior to 1833 we have no means of knowing. Since that time, however, quite a number have been licensed. Many of the local preachers previously mentioned were licensed here. Besides these, several preachers have been licensed here who entered the itinerant ranks. Among them was John C. Miller. who at once took high rank as a preacher, and was for a number of years President of Centenary College. He came here from Pennsylvania to engage in the practice of law; but the great Head of the church had other work for him to do. He was licensed in December, '45, and joined the Mississippi Conference the same year. Robert H. Read, who was for many years a prominent member of the Louisiana Conference, began his ministry here, as did Corydon Chamberlin, who attained great prominence in California, filling the pulpit in Sacramento, San Francisco and Santa Rosa, and also occupying for a time the presidency of Pacific College. All these now "rest from their loved employ"

Benjamin Jones, C. D. Cecil, J. P Drake and T. L. Mellen—all of whom are now active, useful members of the Mississippi Conference received their license from this church.

Though he was not licensed to preach by this church, the name of Richard Abbev should be mentioned here. He came to Natchez in November, 1825, being then about twenty years of age, and resided here until 1840. During the first five years of his sojourn here he was a clerk in the mercantile establishment of P. T. Merrick. In 1830 he became a partner in the firm. About the same time he was married to Miss Julia Bathis, a ward of During the same year he Mrs. Eliza Little. joined the church. He was at once appointed to official position, and remained in office as long as he lived here. In 1840 he removed to Yazoo county and engaged in agriculture. 1844 he was licensed to preach. Since 1856 he has been a member of the Mississippi Con-For two decades or more he has had wide celebrity as an author. He has published more books than any other minister in the Southern Methodist Church. His writings are characterized by independence, boldness and originality Within the domain of theology he has no regard for merely human authorities. He teaches no doctrine simply because someone else teaches it. He scruples not, if occasion requires, to attack any author, however reputable, or any doctrine, however popular and time-honored. He is almost entirely self-made. When he came to Natchez he was a green country boy, without money or friends and almost without education.

My pastorate began with the year '81–'84. 1881. Since then the church has continued to labor diligently for the completion of our house of worship. (For a list of improvements during this time see Appendix D.) The cost of the edifice to date has been something over \$26,-000. Sundry improvements have been made on the parsonage, and there have been some valuable additions to the stock of parsonage furniture. A large percentage of the moneys expended for these purposes was raised by the women of the church. The following figures represent the total expenditures of the church for all purposes during the first three years of my pastorate: '81, \$2,414; '82, \$3,109; '83, \$3,735—total, \$9,258. The moneys raised this year will probably exceed the average for the three previous years. The pastor's salary has been \$1,000 until this year, when it was raised to \$1,100. An effort is now being made to remodel, enlarge and improve our parsonage. Subscriptions aggregating about \$500 have been taken, and the requisite sum will doubtless be raised during the year. The number of members when my pastorate began was 210. Of these 137 now remain, the others having died or removed. The accessions during the four years of my pastorate have been as follows: '81, 43; '82, 53; '83, 59; '84, (up to August 14.) 37 This makes a total of 192 new members, 105 of whom were received on profession of faith. Of these new members, 125 are still with us, the remaining 67 having died, removed or transferred their membership to Wesley Chapel, our new church. Our present membership is 137 plus 125, making 262. Thirty-four of our new members are children and young people who have been reared under the influence of the church. I know of no other church in which so many whole families hold membership. So far as mere church membership is concerned, we have almost exhausted our material. Perhaps more than eleven-twelfths of those who habitually attend our Sabbath morning services are members of the church. The church is in many respects in a flourishing condition. It has a sufficiency of live, energetic male members to fill its score or more of official positions. Its Boards of Stewards and Trustees are well organized and are working systematically in their special

spheres—a tribute which could not have been paid them both at some former periods. During the present year this church has adopted a financial plan which has attracted attention in differents parts of our Conference. The plan is this: At the beginning of the year all the sums to be raised by the church—ministerial salaries and the several collections ordered by the Annual Conference—were put into one general fund, and the members were asked to assess themselves sufficiently to cover the entire amount, and then to agree to pay onefifty-second part of that sum every Sabbath. This was agreed to, and thus all the expenses of the church are met week by week. If anyone is disposed to regard this as an innovation upon time-honored customs, it may be well for him to consult a very ancient book which contains the following: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

Our Sabbath-school, though not numerically large, is a very important auxiliary in our work of evangelization. It is well organized and well supplied with literature. The school at this time numbers 115 pupils and 22 officers and teachers. Few Sunday-schools are rendering more efficient service as "nurseries of the church." As a rule, our Sunday school

children go into the church at an early age. We have a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of 35 members, and a Sunday-school Missionary Society which raises annually \$100 for the support of the pastor of Hunnicutt Chapel, at Naziang, China. We have a live, interesting weekly class meeting and two weekly prayer meetings. One of these—a female prayer meeting—is not very largely attended, though it is productive of much good. Our regular Thursday night prayer meeting has been for some time growing in interest until it has become one of the leading features in our church life. The number of persons who attend it has been nearly trebled within twelve months. prayer meeting within the range of my observation is more promotive of piety and sociability. What we now need most is to secure the attendance of the unawakened upon these prayer meeting services. We have thirteen male and ten female members who will pray in public. Peace and harmony prevail within our borders. Our rules are generally observed. Instances of disorderly walking there are; but they are few Our female members display a most commendable zeal and energy in looking after the temporalities of the church. The fires of daily worship are kept burning on many family altars, and we have a

goodly number of men and women whose daily lives are in beautiful conformity with the teachings of the Divine word. Yet, considering the church as a whole, candor requires me to say that, in deep spirituality and in earnest aggressive zeal for the salvation of souls, we do not measure up to the standard of the New Testament. Too many of our members absent themselves for insufficient reasons from the Sabbath night services and from the prayer and class meetings. There are far too many houses in which no family altar exists: there are far too few of our members who are willing to bear the cross of lifting up their voices in public prayer. There is need of a more extended and general social intercourse among our members. Some seem content with the form, while destitute of the power or godli-Yet in most of these matters there is an upward tendency, and, inasmuch as I have already witnessed in many instances the fulfillment of my hopes and the realization of my plans during my pastorate here, I cherish the anticipation of beholding in the near future a decided improvement along these lines of Christian activity.

The next great problem for the church to solve is how to bring to our services the non-church-goers of the city, "whose name is

legion." Oh! it fills my heart with inexpressible sadness when I remember that there are in our midst many immortal spirits "for whom Jesus died," who, as far as possible, place themselves beyond the range of the church's influence; who spend the hours of the holy Sabbath not in the sanctuary of the Most High, but in places where the fumes of alcohol permeate the air, where low chit-chat. profane twaddle, ribald jest, obscene anecdote and coarse guffaw are the most striking characteristics of social intercourse—where the potent influence of example is felt luring one into the pathway of the gambler and the inebriate—where the surroundings are such as are pre-eminently fitted to paralyze the energies of a virtuous will and spread the torpor and chill of death over the higher aspirations and finer sensibilities of the moral nature. May the Divine Spirit lead these blinded mortals away from these dens of iniquity into the courts of the Lord's house!

It now becomes necessary for me to say a few words concerning our new church, Wesley Chapel. During the first year of my pastorate I became convinced that in order fully to utilize our forces, and to accomplish the work which the church ought to accomplish, it was absolutely necessary to build an additional

house of worship. The population of the city was rapidly increasing, and this influx of population placed among us quite a number of persons who had elsewhere worshiped at our Most of these persons I induced to get their certificates and have their names placed upon our roll; but I could not induce them to Whether their reasons attend our services. for pursuing such a course were good or not, I saw that the obstacles in the way of their active participation in our church work were such as could not be removed. Hence I resolved to secure the building of another house of worship. if it were possible to do so. The project did not at first meet with the approbation of many of our members. Most of them reasoned thus: "We have a building large enough to hold twice as many people as attend our serv-Moreover, our church is not yet completed, and it requires a constant struggle to defray current expenses and at the same time make needed improvements in our house of worship. Under these circumstances undertake the building of still another church seems utterly Utopian." I did not become discouraged, however, but continued to agitate the matter On October 3, 1881, I induced the Quarterly Conference to appoint a committee with authority to purchase a lot and secure

subscriptions for the erection of a building. The committee was composed of T. L. Mellen, G. M. Brown, E. J. Guice, W. A. Gunning and myself. By the first of July, 1882, we had purchased a lot—the very one we preferred to all others—and also secured subscriptions to the amount of more than two hundred dollars toward the erection of a building. We also organized during the summer, under the superintendency of W H. Jeters, a Sunday-school which was held first in a residence on Cemetery street, and afterward in the school-house at the north end of Wall street. The school was small at first, but grew so rapidly that before the close of the year it numbered 75 pupils. Believing that finances would be easier after the lapse of a few months, we made no effort during the latter part of '82 to secure additional subscriptions. In December, 1882. Т Mellen, who had been licensed to preach a short time previous, was appointed by Bishop Wilson to take charge of this mission work. Bro. Mellen had been friendly to the enterprise from the beginning. He now prosecuted the work with such vigor that by June 17, 1883, he had ready for dedication and free of debt a neat, tasteful Gothic edifice costing, exclusive of the lot, \$1,540. It should be stated here that, after the fact had been demonstrated that a new house of worship was needed in our midst, all opposition to this enterprise ceased and many of our members made as liberal contributions to it as their means would allow. Many liberal donations were made also by members of other Protestant Churches. Soon after the completion of the building an organization was effected. Under the efficient pastorate of Rev. T. L. Mellen this new church has maintained a steady and vigorous growth to the present It now numbers 120 communicants. Besides these nearly forty persons have taken the vows of church membership at its altars who have since removed from the city. It has a Sunday-school numbering 110 pupils. has two weekly prayer meetings, a weekly class meeting and a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of eighteen members. Its prayer and class meetings are usually well attended, and its Sabbath night congregations are frequently larger than those of any other white church in the city It promises to be in the near future the equal of the parent church in numerical strength, and it is possible that it may also assume equality in other respects.

The present status of Methodism in Natchez (among the whites) is as follows: Jefferson Street Church, 262 members; Wesley Chapel,

120 members—total, 382 members. This is an increase of 130 per cent. in about twelve years, and an increase of 85 per cent. in less than three years. And just here it must be stated that our rolls in both churches are kept revised to date. We retain no names of nonresidents except those who are only temporarily absent and those who desire to retain membership here because of a lack of church privileges where they live. Methodism is now numerically stronger in this city than it ever was except during a few months of the year 1858. In financial ability we do not, of course, measure up to the standard of ante bellum days; but our pecuniary resources are constantly increasing, and I very much doubt whether the church ever displayed more liberality in proportion to its means than at the present time.

Standing, as we do to-day on the line that separates the old century from the new, it is fitting that we should contemplate the past, the present and the future. As we look backward let us raise a song of thanksgiving to our heavenly Father for the signal mercies which he has showered upon us. As we look around us let us take note of the magnitude of the work that remains to be accomplished, and resolve to enter upon that work with redoubled zeal and energy. As we gaze upon the

impenetrable veil of the future let us hope that it conceals from our eyes results far more glorious than either we or our fathers ever dreamed of, and then let us use our utmost endeavors to transform our loftiest hopes into still loftier realities.

APPENDIX A.

The following are the works from which I have drawn in the preparation of this history: Stevens' History of Methodism, 2 vols.; Bangs' History of Methodism, 3 vols.; McFerrin's Methodism in Tennessee, 3 vols.; Redford's Methodism in Kentucky, 2 vols.; Paine's Life of McKendree, 2 vols.; Biographical Sketches, Summers; Jones' Protestantism in the Southwest, McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, Drake's Life of Steele.

APPENDIX B.

There has been a controversy over Blackman's given name. McFerrin, Redford and other historians give his name as "Learner." Blackman had it recorded in the courts here as "Launer."

APPENDIX C.

WE AND OUR FATHERS. .

List of Officials since 1833, with Date of Their Appointment.

'32. George J. Dicks.

'33. J. Gamble, Christopher Miller, W. C. McDougal, John Stewart, R. Abbey, Randell Cashell, Richmond Bledsoe, Lewis R. Hanchett.

'35. George W Chapman, Miles H. Owen, John Brackett, William Harris and Richard

Bache.

'36. Joseph E. Wilson and James W Hopkins.

'37. Kendall S. Robbins and David C.

Miller.

38. G. W Miller, Isaac Lum, John M. Lawrence.

239. T. A. L. Doniphan and E. L.

Robinson.

'41. T. C. Finney, F. A. W. Davis and Henry J. Barr.

43. John W Messach.

45. **F.** A. Newcomb.

²46. N. A. Speer and Thomas Reed.

'49. Walter Tryine.

250. C. A. Magown and W. P. Anderson.

251. Joseph Wer and D. R. Gunning.

252. Joseph Gorton.

253. S. S. Freeman and Isaac Lane.

'54. D. L. Rivers.

256. William King and Sam Steward.

257 W. N. Sanks and H. A. Thoms.

60. Edmund Miller.

'65. William Dix, W F. Mellen, W J. Carroll.

'67 D. G. Renner and W. F. Mellen.

'70. G. M. Brown.

'74. A. Bahin, C. Whitcomb, J. P. Drake, E. J. Guice, W. H. Mallery and G. J. Bahin.

'76. J. M. Fly.

'77 T. L. Mellen and S. McDowell.

79. R. T. Donaldson, E. G. Delap and W A. Gunning.

'80. G. W Rembert.

Since 1880 the following new names have been added to our official roll: H. C. Norman, J. E. Gibbs, A. B. Swayze, J. M. Kern, H. P. Davis, C. W. Montgomery, A. Trimble.

APPENDIX D.

IMPROVEMENTS SINCE JANUARY, 1881.

The Sunday-school room and the infant class-room have been plastered; the pastor's office has been carpeted and otherwise beautified; the fence enclosing the church lot has been built anew; the entire floor of the audience-room has been neatly carpeted, and the building has been supplied with its full quota of pews; the pulpit platform has been remodeled; the wall in rear of the pulpit has been frescoed; a neat communion table and an elegant set of pulpit furniture have been purchased; the building has been supplied with new and improved gas fixtures; the foundations have been protected by a coat of cement, and shade trees have been planted in the church yard.

APPENDIX E.

WE AND OUR FATHERS.

The Mississippi Annual Conference has held its sessions in Natchez, Miss., nine times, as follows: In '23, '33, '37, '39, '46, '49, '60, '76 and '83.

APPENDIX F

The statistics given include only white members. The church had from an early day a large colored membership. In '58 the colored members numbered 594. I had intended to prepare a separate chapter on Methodism among the colored people; but circumstances not necessary to mention have prevented my doing so.

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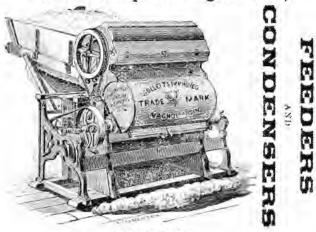
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